

Primitive Gospel Ministry:

OR,

THE QUESTIONS

OF A

REVEREND DOCTOR,

RELATIVE TO THAT SUBJECT,

ANSWERED.

BY A LAYMAN.

“ Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we, are able to bear?”

PETER.



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PREFACE.

IT is to be wished that Dr. B. in writing his questions and answers for children, on the ministerial office, had given us, or rather his children, the whole, instead of a mutilated part of a book, entitled, "A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England," by Robert Nelson, (a Layman) 12th edition, printed in the year 1722; or that he had styled his publication, "A few Questions, with Answers, abridged from Robert Nelson's Companion, &c. with explanatory notes," by C. B.

Dr. B.'s moral conduct and character will not permit me to attribute his publication to any malevolent intention, but I am rather disposed to think his motives were not pure, because from other concurrent circumstances, it is pretty evident that he is tainted with party spirit, and that it is levelled against the Methodists, towards whom he has occasionally evinced a narrow and bigotted spirit. X

His conduct towards that people should have been influenced by a principle of gratitude, and not by that of a party. I say this, because he has been under many and great obligations to them. Why he left them, with whom he preached, and by whom he was taught to acquit himself with decency as a preacher, I know not; but I cannot help observing that Dr. Coke left the Church, and joined the Methodists, leaving a certain establishment, for poverty, and that Dr. B. left the poor Methodists, and joined the Church, I dare not say for a better income, for "woe to them that ran greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward." Jude. X

It is rather unfortunate that we have not a short commentary on intruders into the Church, whom he thought proper to mention in his questions, but quite forgot to give an answer, as some have presumed to say, that they are at a loss to know how he got in; but this does not signify, he knows how he got in, and so do the archdeacon who examined him, and the bishop who ordained him.

However I would submit the following questions to the Dr. but I wot he would not answer them.

Where was he educated? was it not at Kingswood-school, among the Methodists? X

Had

Had it not been for the Methodists, would the foundation-stone of St. James's-church have been yet laid?

Did he not preach and teach among the Methodists, before he was ordained by a bishop?

Were not he and his wife married by the Rev. John Wesley?

By what miraculous power has he been converted from Methodism to the Catholic Church, and how came he to continue so long in error?

"What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year."

But to the point.—These I only mention as a gentle jog, to bring to his remembrance "the rock from whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence he was dug."

An answer to the Dr.'s publication will be attempted, first, by giving a brief history of the primitive gospel ministry, accompanied with such observations as the occasion suggested, as an introduction, and then by answering the questions (the writer would presume to say) in a more direct and unequivocal manner than the Dr. has done.

In the following pages the writer has availed himself of every assistance that has lain in his way, and has made use of those authors whose ideas and language are superior to his own. Whatever errors the Dr. may find, no doubt he will make the greatest allowance for, seeing that the writer is a Layman.



INTRODUCTION.

THE dominion of our Divine Redeemer extends over universal nature ; but his dominion in the church is what christian ministers should more especially inculcate, for on this depends purity of doctrine, discipline, faith, and morality.

A most learned and judicious foreign divine, has excellently treated this subject, by tracing canon law to its origin, and by enquiring on what plan Jesus Christ formed his church. It was not formed on the plan of the Jewish civil government, nor on that of any other civil state, nor on that of the Jewish temples, sanhedrim, or synagogue : the decree of the council at Jerusalem was advice, but not law. Canons in the primitive church were general rules of explication and action, devoid of coercion. The emperor Justinian gave them the force of civil law. There are, according to the primitive constitution of the christian church, neither regal, episcopal, nor papal rights in matters of faith and conscience. Jesus Christ formed a kingdom merely spiritual, and the apostles exercised only a spiritual authority, under the direction of Jesus Christ.

The gospel was a simple truth which any honest man might tell, and our Lord chose the simplest men to promulgate its doctrines. They founded multitudes of religious societies, called *churches*, and they had the pleasure of seeing them choose from among themselves, honest and able men to preach the Divine Word, and to administer the standing ordinances of Jesus Christ, in the absence, and after the death of the apostles. They were called * presbyters or elders, bishops, pastors, and teachers, appellations which appear to have distinguished the same office and order of persons ; to this was added another order, called deacons, who were stewards appointed to take care of the temporal affairs of the church, something like the church-wardens of the establishment. The deacons generally placed themselves round the pulpit, and before sermon one of them cried with a loud voice,—“*Silence,*”—
“*Hearken,*”

* Le Sueur's Hist. de l'Eglise, &c. An. 141. Mosheim, vol. 1. page 46.
St. Jerome says, “that bishops are above presbyters, more by custom, than by the appointment of Christ,” Opera vol. 6. page 198.

“*Hearken,*” —or something to that effect*, and no doubt this was repeated at proper intervals. For some time, preaching was common to bishops, or elders, deacons, and private brethren, in the primitive church. We find that even women preached, till they were prohibited by St. Paul †. He however, did not assign that office exclusively to any particular set of *men*, and in case the person appointed as bishop or pastor over them, was sick or absent; one of the deacons, or sometimes a short-hand writer, read a homily ‡ that had been preached. “*Si quis episcopus vel presbyter ob infirmitatem ipse prædicare non possit, a diaconis in ecclesia homiliæ patrum recitentur,—Assistenti plebi est per notarium espositio recitata ¶.*”

In process of time it was restrained to bishops, and to such as they should appoint. They called this appointment ordination, and at last attached I know not what ideas of mystery and influence to the word, and of dominion to the bishop who pronounced it. The word *ordain* was originally equal to *appoint*, and if twenty christians nominated a man to instruct them once, he was *ordained* or *appointed* a preacher for the time, which nomination and appointment was the peculiar privilege of the *people* ||. If they, however, should be dissatisfied, they discharged him, and we find St. Clement §, in his epistle to the Corinthians, complaining that they had discharged a minister, who had been fully and honorably acquitted of the crime with which they charged him; but though it was customary originally for the people to appoint the ministers, yet they were such as God had peculiarly called and fitted for the ministry, as we find in Corinthians. Not with vain and empty titles, but were commanded, and endued with power, to preach at

* *A custom like this might be of use in some modern congregations.*

† To make a lady the head of the church, as queen Elizabeth, &c. and yet deny the sex the liberty of *preaching* to the members, is genuine rectified spirit of mystery.

‡ That is, a sermon, or public discourse spoken to the common people, *ομιλία* ab *ομιλος* multitudo—vulgus—plebs.

¶ Synod. Valens. Can. 4.—Greg. M. in prolog. homil.

|| Mosheim, vol. 1. p. 45. Even after the hierarchy was introduced, the right of voting at the election of a bishop was vested in the whole body of the people, who on the appointed day flocked in multitudes from all parts of the diocese. *Incredibilis multitudo non solum ex eo oppido sed etiam ex vicinis urbibus ad suffragia ferenda convenerat.* Sulp. Siv. in vit. mar. c. 7. In the West, *the people chose their bishops till the time of Charlemagne*, Basnage, tom 3, p. 24. Hist. des Eglises reformées.

§ Though I here quote Clement, it is not because I esteem the writings of the fathers of sufficient authority to be depended upon, but I conceive myself entitled to use them against the Dr. seeing he has thought proper to produce them as evidence; for I consider a great number of the fathers as the usurpers of liberty, and the instruments of corruption in the church.

at one and the same time. These nominations were accompanied with *prayer*, and sometimes with the blessing and good wishes of the elders, expressed by the ancient Jewish custom of laying hands on the head *, as we find in Acts vi. 3. when the disciples chose seven deacons from among themselves. Thus simple was *ordination*, but it was in time restrained to the *bishop*, and that name was particularly attributed to him †. It is even acknowledged by some of the most learned Episcopalians, as Stillingfleet, Dodwell, and others, that the office of bishop, above other pastors in the church, has no foundation in the oracles of God.

In the fourth and subsequent centuries, the mystery of Antichrist began to work, as was foretold ‡. We find religion pompous, ceremonious, and corrupt. Now commence establishments, intolerance, and persecution. And different parties alternately gain the ascendancy, according to their power and influence ¶ at the court of Constantinople, and for the first time religion becomes a state tool.

“Inventions added in a fatal hour,
 “Human appendages of pomp and power,
 “Whatever shines in outward grandeur great,
 “I give it up—a creature of the state.—
 “Wide of the *church*, as hell from heaven is wide,
 “The blaze of riches, and the glare of pride.
 “The vain desire to be entitled *lord*,
 “The worldly kingdom, and the princely sword.
 “But should the bold usurping spirit dare,
 “Still higher climb, and sit in Moses’ chair,
 “Power o’er my faith and conscience to maintain,
 “Shall I submit, and suffer it to reign?
 “Call it the *church*, and darkness put for light,
 “Falsehood with truth confound, and wrong with right.
 “No, I dispute the evil’s haughty claim,
 “The spirit of the world be still its name,
 “Whatever call’d by man, ’tis purely evil,
 “’Tis Babel, Antichrist, and Pope, and Devil.”—

Towards

* “What is the imposition of hands,” says St. Austin, “but a prayer that is made over the person?” Opera, vol. 7. p. 410.

† The principal occasion of distinction, was assemblies or synods. The college of *presbyters* chose one for their president, and he then only was called a bishop, as signifying to overlook or preside. The office of *perpetual president* of the council was conferred on the bishop of the principal city, and these aspiring prelates, who soon acquired the lofty titles of *metropolitans* and *primates*, secretly prepared themselves to usurp over their episcopal brethren, the same authority which the bishop had so lately assumed over the college of presbyters, and now nulla ecclesia sine episcopo. Mosheim 269, 576. Dupin. Antiq. Eccles. Disciplin. p. 19, 20. Le Sueur Hist. de l’Eglise, an. 142.

‡ Acts xx. 29.

¶ Arius became *orthodox*, and Athanasius was pronounced an heretic, through the influence of a few eunuchs. Socrates, l. 2. c. 2. Sozomon, 3, 18.

Towards the end of the fourth century, we find the teachers of christianity powerful, proud, and dignified. They assimilated themselves to the manners of the age. They complimented each other in polite language, and with sounding titles. St. Jerome styled Pope Damasus, "Most blessed Sir," and in process of time, the clergy, long accustomed to titular distinctions, were affronted when their titles were omitted. It was in the dispute between the patriarch of Alexandria and the pope of Rome, concerning *supremacy*, that the papal faction prevailing, titles of superlative dignity were appropriated to the Roman pontiffs, and titles of comparative dignity to patriarchs, archbishops *, and so on. "Hæ appellationes nulla lege precipiuntur," says one. Wickliffe, Luther, Zuinglius, Huss, and other reformers, said, "It is *unnecessary* to give men the titles of *master*, or *doctor*, in divinity, therefore in good reason these titles are to be shunned in the church of God." But I go farther, and say, that they are commanded to the contrary. "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your Father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven; neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ," Matth. xxiii. 8, 9, 10; and he enforces this doctrine by saying, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so:" and he continues, according to the translation, proved by Mosheim, to be right. "He that performs the office of a presbyter, or elder, among you, let him not think himself superior to a minister or deacon," Luke xxii. 25, 26.

But we are told, that these ecclesiastical dignities were in imitation of the Levitical priesthood. The ceremonial law, which consisted of types and shadows, was abolished by its fulfilment, and we are no longer under the law †. If our clergy would wish to imitate that order, they should get the *bells* and ornaments of the pontifical robes of Aaron. With respect to Heb. v. 4. it has no relation to the gospel ministry, but has an allusion alone to Christ.

If it had been intended by our Saviour that such ceremonies should be continued, no doubt it would have been recorded for the instruction and regulation of the church; as

* The name of *archbishop* was first used by Athanasius, and from the year 430 was quite common in the church. Le Sueur, an. 281,

† "It was not till after the reign of Adrian, when Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, and the Jews dispersed, that an opinion began to prevail, that the Christian ministers succeeded to the rights of the Levitical priesthood." Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 146.

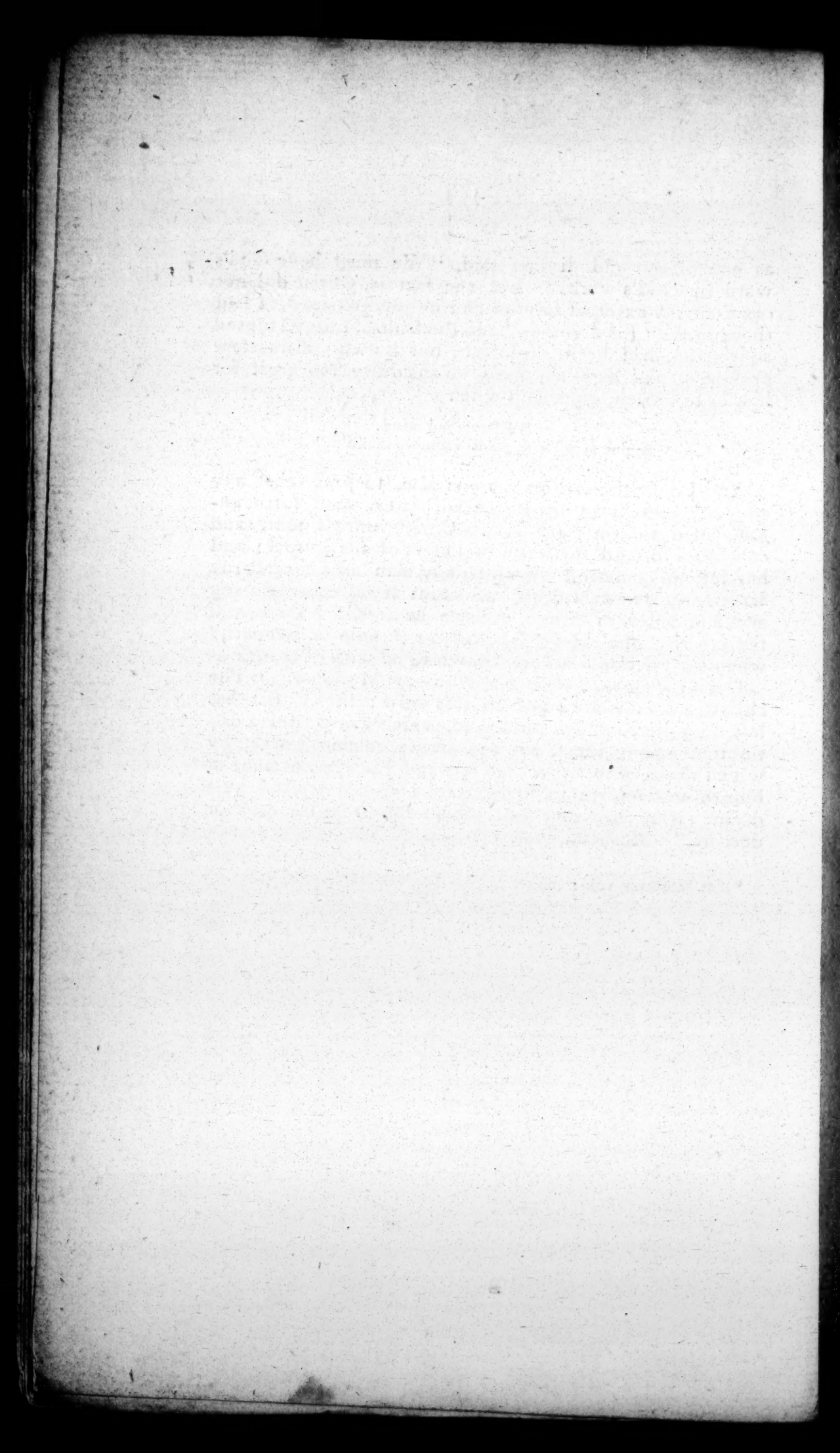
as one of our old divines said, "We must have God's word for God's work." But the fact is, Christ did not *command any* external form of church government*. I had thought the "*Jus divinum*," and the fable of uninterrupted succession, had been exploded; but he who soars after *preferment and dignities*, finds no absurdity too great for him to broach, especially when

" His Reverend mind
" Begins to grow Right Reverently inclin'd."

And I defy the Dr. or any one else, to *prove* that any one can *jure divino*, by divine authority, send forth *ungodly* men to teach *godliness*. Christ himself sent, and continues to send forth the ministers of the gospel; and has left no command by which any man may contravene *his mission*, by establishing intolerant laws, or ordain any man a minister, or bishop, because he says, "I am moved thereto by the Holy Ghost," or "*nolo episcopari*," when such declarations are known to be void of truth.

I shall conclude with the words of Mosheim. "The christian doctors are equal in this sense; that Christ has left no positive or special decree, which constitutes a distinction among them, nor any divine commandment, by which those, who in consequence of the appointment of human wisdom, are in higher ranks, or can demand by a divine right, obedience and submission from the inferior doctors." Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 44.

* See Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 43.



QUESTIONS ON THE MINISTRY.

1. **I**S church government of divine institution?

Yes. Christ reigns in his spiritual kingdom, for "his kingdom is not of this world," John xviii. 36. He presides not over tythes and oblations *, but in the hearts of the universal church, or congregation of believers, through the whole world, and of which he is the head, Eph. i. 22. v. 23. Is. ix. 6. Acts x. 36. Rom. ix. 5. &c. &c. &c.

Particular churches, which are taught and regulated by the bishops, or pastors, whom Christ hath set over them, are parts of this *universal church*, "but a religious *establishment* is no part of christianity †."

2. What were the apostles, before they received any commissions; that is, before they were sent out, and dispersed in different parts of the earth, to teach mankind the truths of the gospel?

While the apostles were with Christ, they did not preach, or officiate, having their great High Priest with them.

3. Whom did the apostles succeed in their commission?

Our blessed Saviour himself, who made them overseers of his flock, and sent them out to teach the gospel. Acts i. 8.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8. How many commissions did Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, give his apostles?

A great many, if they may be so called, particularly three. Mark iii. 13, 14, 15. Mark vi. 7, 11. Matth. xxviii. 18, 20.

9. What do you learn from the conduct of our Saviour?

That he entirely overturned the Jewish ceremonies, and particularly the Levitical priesthood, which consisted in types and shadows, of which he was the fulfilment—that he introduced *new* things, especially the new covenant,
and

* Prideaux. Connect.

† Archdeacon Paley's Phil. 554.

and that old things being done away, all things are become new *.

10. What is the order of church ministers?

Two distinct offices; the bishops or elders one, and the deacons the other †.

There are no priests, strictly speaking, under the New Testament dispensation, but Christ, and of his priesthood only was that of Aaron typical, and no man can produce one single text out of the New Testament which gives any the least hint, that the ministers of the gospel are to be considered as priests. They are every where spoken of under another character, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, appointed, not to make atonement for the sin of the people, (which was the office of the priests) but to instruct, rebuke, exhort, and watch over them in love, as those that must give an account ‡.

Priest is a name never applied to ministers of the gospel in the New Testament; the name, perhaps, is retained to support the pretended divine right to tythes, which were with great reason paid to the Jewish priests, since they, being of the tribe of Levi, were excluded from any share in the division of the land.

But presbyters, or elders, (or priests, as the church commonly calls them) and bishops, are not distinct orders, but different names for the same persons. The church at Philippi had but two orders of church officers amongst them, bishops and deacons, Phil. i. 1. The name, office, and work of a bishop and presbyter, are the same. "For this cause left I thee in Crete ¶, that thou shouldest set in order the things

* Eph. ii. 15. Heb. viii. 13. Gal. v. 18. Heb. x. 9. vii. 18, 19, et pass.

† The Dr. allows that the king, judges, and magistrates, are bishops in temporal affairs; but how would a man be laughed at, were he to address the bench of justices at the quarter sessions, as a bench of bishops; and how ridiculous would it be, if one, meeting with an overseer of the highways, were to salute him with the pompous title of 'bishop of the roads and highways, I hope I see your lordship well!'

At the assizes of Lancaster were the Dr. to address the judge, 'My lord bishop of temporal affairs, the judge would readily commit him to the castle for contempt of court,' if he did not view him with an eye of pity, as a man deranged in his mental faculties.

‡ Bens. Answer to Russell.

¶ It is rather curious that the Dr. should be obliged to defend the rights of diocesan bishops, by such paltry aids as the apocryphal notes at the end of the epistles, and should quote scripture merely to serve his own purpose. How came he to stumble on Jeroboam "who made of the lowest of the people priests of the high places; whosoever would, he consecrated." It would appear from this passage, that the Jewish kings had the power of consecration: a power which is now denied to christi-
an

things that are wanting, and ordain elders," that is presbyters, (which is the meaning of the word elder, in our language, and the same word in the original, though our translation has adopted two of the same import) "in every city, for a bishop must be blameless," Tit. i. 5, 7.

Paul called the presbyters of the church of Ephesus together, and charged them, to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them bishops. Our translations have it *overseers, which is not improper, since it is the duty of a bishop to inspect into the conduct of his flock, Acts xx. 27, 28, so 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3. "The presbyters among you, I exhort, who also am a presbyter, feed the flock of God among you, taking the oversight thereof," that is, discharging the office of bishops, as the word επισκοπος imports †.

Deacons are not so properly an order of ministers, being first appointed to take care of the poor, Acts vi. That some of them *preached*, is certain, as Stephen and Philip, but not the more on account of this order, but because they had the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Here note 1. That there were diocesan bishops, who had no immediate connection with one congregation, but had the charge of many congregations equally, and the whole power of jurisdiction in them, vested in their own persons, is more, and a great deal more, than we are able to find in scripture. Indeed we find there were many bishops in the city of Philippi, at least more than one, (Phil. i. 1.) Not diocesan bishops, I trow; two or three cities, such as Philippi, are known to be little enough for one of the least of them. Bishopricks ‡ are frequently denoted by the ¶ word παροιχια (parish), as bishop of the parish of Ephesus, parish of Corinth, parish of Athens, &c.

2. That

an monarchs, and only granted to bishops, who, like Jeroboam, consecrate priests from the dregs of the people.

* It is probable this was artfully done by the translators, least the name elders and bishops, being so plainly applied to the same persons, might have embarrassed them in their disputes with the Puritans.

They did the same with regard to the word congregation, translating it church, though the word in the original signifies any assembly whatever, since the word "ἐκκλησια" is applied to the tumultuous mob at Ephesus, Acts xix. 32. And the word "παχα", which never means any thing but the Jewish passover, is most strangely and absurdly rendered Easter, Acts xii. 4.

† Le Sueur. tom. 1. p. 447.

‡ The Dr. lays great stress on the word bishoprick being mentioned in the Acts, chap. i. ver. 20, as "it is written in the book of Psalms, his bishoprick let another take." How the word *bishoprick* was foisted in, I know not, for in the 109th Psalm, ver. 8, the words are, "Let another take his office," or charge. In the Old Testament, there is neither the word bishop, archbishop, nor bishoprick, in any part of it; if there is, let the Dr. give us chapter and verse.

¶ Iraneus.

2. That our *diocesan* bishops have no right to appropriate to *themselves* the office of ordination. (See page 16).

11. What is the office of a deacon?

* The deacons were appointed by the church to receive the collections, take care of the poor, visit the sick, provide things necessary for the sacrament, and help occasionally in administering; and most, if not all, to preach when there was a necessity for it †.

12. What is the office of a priest?

That there is no such office in the christian church, hath been already shewn, there being now no sacrifices to offer, (Heb. x. 12.) nor any of the business of the priest to perform, such as killing sheep, slaying oxen, burning the fat of lambs, offering the ashes of an heifer, inspecting old leprous walls, &c. &c. &c.

13. What is the office of a bishop ‡?

To overlook and inspect, or preside over a church or congregation, to administer the ordinances, to preach the word, to admit into church-fellowship, to rebuke, and exhort, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Col. i. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 5. 1 Pet. v. 2.

But is it not impossible for the bishops of the established church to do this? Bishopricks here take in a county or two, or more. Lincoln includes not only that large county, but likewise all Leicestershire, Huntingdon, Bedford, Bucks, and part of Hereford. Read the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and see wherein they resemble our *lord bishops* ¶. So far are the latter from being apt to teach, that the Welch ones often do not understand the language of the people over whom they are set: they are more in the palace, than in the pulpit, and oftentimes more at court, than in their dioceses ||.

14. May a layman, who knows the gospel, preach it without *episcopal* ordination §?

We

* Burkit on Timothy, 3d chap. verse 8th.

† Acts vi. King Prim. Ch. Discip.

‡ The Dr.'s answer to this question is very short, viz. "to preside over the church, to confirm its members, and to ordain ministers in it;" but should he not have enlarged a little more from Nelson, p. 477, where it is further said, that "he is to dispose of church-alms, preach, pray, administer the holy sacraments, and *absolve penitents*?"

¶ How ridiculous is the farce of appointing our lord bishops. The king sends the dean and chapter a Conge d'elire, and a letter, recommending some particular divine, (whom they dare but choose) yet they pray God to direct their choice, (which is but Hobson's choice) and return him thanks for directing them in the election of so worthy a person.

|| There are a very few exceptions to this general rule, as Drs. Porteus and Watson, &c.

§ If none have a right to preach, teach, or administer the sacrament, except

We have no such distinction in scripture as that of *clergy and laity†, both terms meaning the *people*, though the former was appropriated peculiarly to the christians. We are commanded to edify one another, 1 Thess. v. 11, 12, and are encouraged to administer one to another, Jas. v. 19, 20. Nor have we any command not to preach without ordination, it being only used when the preacher was set apart to some particular congregation or church, and then only by the elders or people. Paul and Barnabas preached long before they were set apart. Nor have we any intimation that Apollos ever was ordained, unless the instructions of Aquila and Priscilla may be called such, Acts xviii, 24 to the end.

15. May a layman administer the ordinance of baptism?

We have no command to the contrary; and if God hath given power to perform the greater office of preaching without ordination, doth he not also give the power to perform the lower one of baptism.

16. May a deacon consecrate the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper?

The consecration of the bread and wine is nothing more than a blessing asked, upon what we are going to receive, and which any man has a right to do, seeing we are commanded to glorify God in all we do, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all unto the glory of God.

The Lord's Supper did not succeed in the room of the sacrifices under the law, nor have we any thing in scripture to support such an opinion‡.

15. If

except those who have been ordained by a bishop, what a set of presumptuous men were Drs. Doddridge, Watts, Leyland, and others, whose writings are still much admired, and whose memories are yet revered by many of the clergy of the church of England.

According to the Dr.'s statement, no church can be catholic except governed by bishops, priests, and deacons, therefore the Presbyterian churches of Geneva, Switzerland, and Scotland, are not catholic churches, though the latter is by law established, and which the king, by his coronation oath, engages to defend, and are annually convened by his authority, without the benefit of lawn sleeves, or priests among the ministers of the gospel, as they are usually stiled. Perhaps the Dr. may stand up as a champion for the Scots universities, as one of them conferred on him the degree of D. D., which, like popish ordination, may be valid, though the doctrines of both churches may be, in his opinion, false and erroneous.

* Cleris, i. e. gregibus. Olim populus Israeliticus dicebatur *χληρος*, sive patrimonium et hæreditas Dei, nunc populus Christianus et cætus fidelium ex Judæis et Gentibus conflatus. Robinson.

† *Λαος*, the people.

‡ The Dr. appears peculiarly unhappy in his quotations from scripture to support his dogmas, most of them, like the one he has here quoted, Heb. v. 4. having no reference at all to the subject proposed.

17. If a person be called of God, is it needful for him to be set apart or ordained by elders or ministers*?

It does not seem to be absolutely necessary, but no doubt is expedient, when the minister is set apart to any particular church for the sake of order and regulation.

18. Has any person beside a bishop or elder a right to ordain ministers?

Exclusive rights have nothing to do with church government, but it is perhaps the most proper that those who are intended for the ministry, should be set apart, or appointed to the ministry, by those who have been also called of God to that office.

What right diocesan bishops have to usurp the business of ordination, as belonging only to them, excluding all others from that office, is hard to guess: and yet we are told that unordained ministers have no right to baptize, &c. —that our ministers can never expect a blessing upon their labours, nor the people any benefit from them, for want of episcopal ordination. Sad, indeed, was this really the case: but whence do the church of England bishops derive this power? They must acknowledge that all their validity is derived from the idolatrous church of Rome. Yes, this is necessary to keep up their pretended apostolic† descent. But they abuse this their good mother, from whom they derive these mighty powers, in a strange manner, in one of the homilies; to which every clergyman subscribes, as containing a good and wholesome doctrine. The homily says, that

* But why does not the Dr. quote a passage from St. Paul, when he relates his conversion to Agrippa? Acts xxvi. ver. 16. "For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a *minister*," (not a bishop) ver. 18. "To open the eyes of the Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," &c. &c. In this we see St. Paul was appointed a *minister*, not a priest, or bishop, and the duty which he was sent to perform, which he performed most diligently. He is styled an apostle of Jesus Christ, but I cannot recollect one passage where he is named a bishop of Jesus Christ. But allowing him to be a bishop, I wish the learned Dr. would tell us what his income was, and from what it arose, and whether our modern bishops, priests, and deacons, obey their Lord's command in going forth to teach all nations, as the apostles did.

According to the Dr. the apostle must have committed an error, in preaching the gospel before he was ordained by a bishop, for at this time he was only a layman, called of God, ver. 19, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;" ver. 20, "But shewed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Here we have a glorious example of a layman, without episcopal ordination, boldly preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no one forbidding him: but it is too clear the Dr. would exclude all such as are not of his way of thinking.

† See the Dr.'s pamphlet, page 4.

"that the church of Rome is idolatrous, and antichristian, not only a harlot, as the scripture calleth her, but also a foul, filthy, withered old harlot, the foulest and filthiest that ever was seen, and that it at present is and hath been for nine hundred years; it is far from the nature of a true church, that nothing can be more."—What miracles are here! That which is no true church, nor has been any thing like for eleven hundred years past, (it is now more than two hundred years since the homilies were composed, and Rome is not altered since) yet conveys true regular church offices and power; and an anti-apostolic church imparts genuine apostolic orders*!!!

19. Are not bishops and elders of the same order, since both are called by the same name?

They certainly are.

20. Was the authority of the bishop ever disputed?

Yes; the present English dissenters may be traced back in authentic manuscripts, to the Non-conformists,—to the Puritans,—to the Lollards,—to the Vallences,—to the Albigences, and I suspect through the Paulicians, and others, to the Apostles.—These churches had sometimes a clandestine existence, and at other times a visible, though not a legal, one.—There was one at Chesterton, near Cambridge, which affirmed, that all priests, and people in orders were incarnate devils. Item quod papa est antichristus, et sacerdotes sunt ejus discipuli et omnes ordinati sunt diaboli incarnati†.

21. May a bishop preside over more than one city?

We find St. Paul ‡ who was an apostle, and Timothy and Titus who were ¶ Evangelists, || overlooked many churches and were not confined to one city.—And what then? Why, St. Paul, left Titus in Crete, therefore, metropolitans have a right to extend their dominion over whole provinces.—St. Paul left Titus in Crete, therefore, princes have a power of appointing lord bishops.—St. Paul left Titus in Crete, therefore,

* We might with propriety here take notice of the various inconsistencies, absurdities, superstitions, contradictions, &c. &c. &c. with which the liturgy, articles, offices, &c. of this apostolic church, abound; but as this alone would require a volume, we refer you to the different publications on this subject.

† Robinson.

‡ St. Paul was not properly a bishop, he was an apostle, and a tent-maker by trade, which he had recourse to occasionally for a livelihood, as with Aquila and Priscilla.

¶ Whitby on Tit.

|| Eusebius, indeed, calls Timothy and Titus, bishops, Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. but I do not account him an authority to be depended upon. Baronius says of him, more than once, that he was "Temporum eversor, calumniator maliciosus, profusus adulator;" and other such epithets he bestows upon him, and often not without cause. Prid. Connect. Le Clerc. Ars Critica, tom. 1. 3069.

therefore, bishops in all ages, and in all countries, have a power to govern other ministers, by oaths, subscriptions, canons &c.—St. Paul left Titus in Crete, ergo, episcopacy is *jure divino*!

This reasoning would perhaps suit the Dr., but a man would be very unwilling to give up his religious liberty to such reasoning.

22. What does our Saviour call intruders into his church?

To indulge the Dr. we will let him have his text for an answer, begging he will make a proper application of it*.

“He that entereth not by the *door* (Christ Jesus) into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief, and a robber, John x. 1.

23. Has God ever manifested his displeasure against those who have arrogantly assumed the office of *priesthood*, i.e. the Jewish priesthood?

Yes; but the Jewish economy has nothing to do with christian ministers.

24. But, does God always punish in the act of sin, or immediately after it is committed?

No; “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; for, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.—Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration, because of advantage,” 2 Peter ii. 9. Jude, 14, 15, 16.

25. Is it the will of Jesus Christ that his ministers should be supported by his church?

Yes; undoubtedly it is, even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should *live* of the gospel; 1 Cor. ix. 14; but there is nothing in the scriptures to support them in the endeavour to heap up riches, or make a trade of the ministry, nor have they any scripture-claim to tythes, they being abolished with the Jewish priesthood.

* The university of Cambridge, perhaps, may say, that the right door into a doctorship is not through Scotland.

